introducing said cell-polymeric composition into the animal; and

following the step of introducing, hardening the polymer into a three-dimensional open-lattice structure which entraps water molecules to form a hydrogel containing the dissociated cells.

F2

35. An implant for introducing cells into an animal, said implant being a cell-polymeric composition comprising: dissociated cells and a biodegradable, biocompatible natural or synthetic organic polymer, wherein the polymer hardens into a continuous three-dimensional open-lattice structure which entraps water molecules to form a hydrogel construct containing said dissociated cells, said hydrogel construct having a desired anatomic shape.

36. An implant for introducing cells into an animal to form tissue, said implant being a cell-polymeric composition comprising: dissociated cells and a biodegradable, biocompatible natural or synthetic organic polymer, wherein the polymer hardens into a three-dimensional open-lattice structure which entraps water molecules to form a hydrogel construct containing said dissociated cells, said cell-polymeric composition being suitable for implantation into an animal before hardening.

44. A method for introducing cells into an animal to form tissue, comprising:

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forming a cell-polymeric composition by mixing dissociated cells with a solution of a biodegradable, biocompatible natural or synthetic organic polymer;

introducing said cell-polymeric composition into the animal; and

hardening the polymer into a three-dimensional open-lattice structure which entraps water molecules to form a hydrogel construct in which the dissociated cells are uniformly distributed,

wherein the step of hardening is completed after introduction of said cell-polymeric composition into the animal.

F4

46. The method of claim 44, wherein the step of hardening is initiated to partially harden the polymer before the step of introducing.